

Claims:

Claim 1 (Canceled)

Claim 2 (Currently Amended) The knife holder assembly according to claim 13, wherein said plate extends parallel to and is spaced apart from a surface of said knife.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended)) The knife holder assembly according to claim 13, wherein said plate comprises a transparent material.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The knife holder assembly according to claim 13, further comprising a base member, wherein said plate is arranged pivotably on said base member.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The knife holder assembly according to claim 4, further comprising a switch, wherein said plate is coupled to said switch.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended) The knife holder assembly according to claim 13, wherein said plate has a functional position covering said cutting edge, in which said plate is spaced apart from said cutting edge.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended ) A microtome comprising a knife holder assembly according to claim 13.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): The microtome according to claim 7, further comprising a switch, a brake or arresting device, and a knife slide or specimen slide, wherein said switch is coupled to said brake or arresting device for said knife slide or specimen slide.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): The microtome according to claim 8, further comprising a circuit that includes a motorized cutting drive, wherein said switch is arranged in said circuit that includes said motorized cutting drive.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn): The microtome according to claim 8, further comprising a control panel with switching elements thereon, wherein said switch is connected in series with said switching elements on said control panel.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended) The knife holder assembly according to claim 13, further comprising a base member,

wherein said plate is arranged displaceably on said base member.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended) The knife holder assembly according to claim 11, further comprising a switch,

wherein said plate is coupled to said switch.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended) A knife holder assembly for a microtome having a cutting plane, in which, in a cutting stroke for section production, a specimen with a specimen holder moves relative to a knife edge, comprising:

a knife having a cutting edge and a back face,

a knife carrier, and

a blade guard comprising a plate, said blade guard having an operating position,

wherein said plate is arranged in such a way that performance of cutting operations and section removal takes place even with the plate situated in its operating position by an arrangement of the plate in its operating position parallel to the cutting plane, on the side of the knife carrier, which is on the side of the operator remote from the specimen holder and the specimen received on the specimen holder, and at the same time the plate faces the cutting edge of the knife with a small gap in the cutting direction between the cutting edge of the knife and the edge of the plate toward the knife with a maximum width chosen such that the joint of a person's finger cannot come into contact with the cutting edge of the knife – in order to prevent

unintentional gripping of the knife edge – but sufficient for a section taken from the specimen to be able to slide through said small gap between the plate and the back face of the knife.